

Items of Interest.

—The population of Australia is less than five million, but economists declare it could support one hundred million with ease.

—There is supposed to be an active volcano in the state of eruption on the Olympic Mountain, south of Port Townsend, Wash.

—It is reported in Paris that it has been decided to commence the construction of a ship canal to connect the Rhine and the Ede rivers at a cost of 200,000,000 marks.

—One hundred and seventy-six letter carriers of Chicago have been found delinquent in office, the charge which is most frequent is that of loitering or drinking in saloons.

—The largest black diamond ever seen was shown to the Academy of Science in Paris the other day. It was found in a diamond field of Balvia, Brazil, last July. It weighed 3073 carats, the largest carbon weighing 1700 carats; it is as big as a large pear, and without a flaw.

—Mr. Gladstone mapped out for himself a course of study when he retired from public life which he still continues. He can be found in his study about ten in the morning, and reads and writes steadily till luncheon time. After this he retires for more work. After dinner comes another period of reading.

—It has been said that Paris is the cleanest city in the world. The toilet of the capital is performed every morning by 2000 male and 600 female scavengers, divided into 149 brigades. The men work from four in the morning to four in the evening, less two hours off for meals, or ten hours a day. The women are engaged in the morning only.

—The queen of Korea was murdered on October 8. The palace was broken into by a body of Korean troops and a band of Japanese Soshi in civilian dress. The colonel in command of the troops, on refusing to enter the palace, was killed, and a number of the palace guards were slain. The Japanese entered the queen's room and killed the queen, the minister of the household and three women. The bodies were taken outside and burned. The king is now a prisoner, and his father has been proclaimed dictator. A new cabinet has been constituted of pro-Japanese elements. The queen's officials have fled or are in hiding. Appeals have been issued to the Koreans to rise and expel the Japanese.—*Ex.*

—Workmen in Chapan wear, both in their caps and on their backs, an inscription stating their business and the name of their employer.

—There are about fifty million tons of anthracite or hard coal produced in the United States, and this comes almost entirely from Pennsylvania. The number of men and boys employed in the anthracite mines in this State in 1893, was 132,944. Could our readers see the interior of one of these mines, hundreds of feet below the earth's surface, and see the men and boys at work there, they would sit by their hard coal fires with different feelings.—*Ex.*

LITTLE MISS MUFFET.

Perhaps I might as well tell you, to start with, that Tildy Muffet wasn't her name at all. It was Matilda Florence Gray, but her mamma called her so because one day she acted silly, like the girl old Mother Goose tells us about:—

Little Miss Muffet,
Sat on a tuffet.
Eating of curds and whey;
There came in a spider,
And sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

Tildy was a little country girl, used to seeing bugs and spiders, and she ought not to have screamed when she saw such things. But one day she sat on the sawhorse by the woodpile, eating her bread and milk, and just because a very small spider indeed spun down beside her, she dropped her bowl and tumbled down off her seat, and ran into the house screaming to her mother just as loud as ever she could.

Her screams brought Betty, the cook, from the kitchen, and brother Ben from the back yard, and old Towser from his kennel, and frightened Tabby, the cat, out of a comfortable snooze—all thinking some sad accident had happened. When they learned that it was only a spider that had caused all the racket, they were much amused. They laughed at her a good deal, and this came very near making her cry, but I think may be it will make her a little braver next time.

I can tell you that Clorinda, Tildy's doll, was very much ashamed of her. She never stirred, and the spider walked by and went off about his business, and never hurt her at all. But it is a well-known fact that sometimes dolls show much more good sense than little girls; and this is the reason why Tildy's mother sometimes called her little girl "Miss Tildy Muffet."—*The Little Ones.*

Do the wounds made by a friend ever heal?

"GOD THOUGHT SO."

"Well, for shure, and where is me child!" exclaimed Nora, the nurse.

Nora had three children to take care of, but baby Maud was sound asleep in her straw carriage, with a lace parasol swinging over her, and James Flourney West, Jr., was busy making a pile of small stones in the walk; only Esther was missing.

Nora left the sleeping baby and the busy little boy in the care of another friendly nurse, and soon found Esther down in the corner of the hotel Allegheny's big lawn, where the sweet briar covered a rustic fence, and made a place so pretty, and so sweet, that birds and butterflies and all winged creatures loved it.

"Och, me angel! Come away thin from this dreadful place;" cried Nora: "the sun will make freckles on your pretty skin, as big as a hin's egg, and the bees will be stingin' of ye till ye can't see; come away."

"Oh, please don't take me away, Nora," said the little girl; "it's so pretty down here, and I won't tear my dress nor anything naughty. Did you ever see anything as pretty as these wild roses? And they smell so sweet."

"They aren't half so pretty as thim lovely beds in diamonds and hearts up by the house, where I be sitting with all the others," said Nora.

"Oh I don't like those stiff beds, with things in rows, and shell edges," said the girl: "they are just men's flowers, but these are God's."

"I wouldn't be saying such a thing for woruld," answered the nurse; "them poor little things are no manner of 'count, and it's niver a bit worth while for them to be blooming down here out o' sight of people."

"God thought it was worth while," said Esther; "and the birds and butterflies think so, and I think so too. I don't want to sit up on the steps and hear the nurses talk, Nora, so please let me stay down here in this sweet little place."

"The likes of her!" said Nora to herself, going back to the nurses' gathering place: "ye wad think the Good Man himsel was paying a visit to her."

And that was true, though Nora did not know it, that God himself visits the hearts of those who love the beautiful works of his hands.—*E. P. A.*

WHOEVER tries to bid goodby to his sins one at a time, will never get them all behind him.

WE are never so strong as when we are thankful.